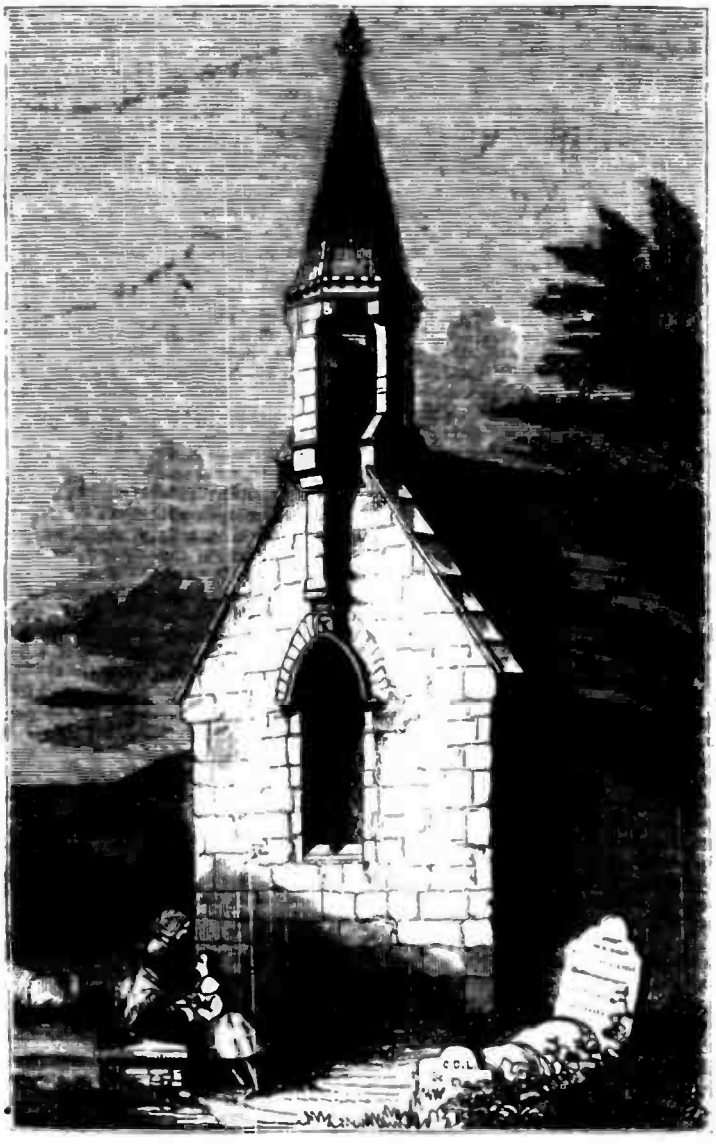
BELL-TURRET, CORSTON CHURCH, WILTS.



BELL TURRETS.

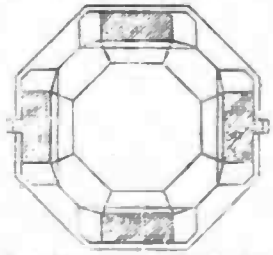
CORSTON CHURCH, NEAR MALMSBURY.

It appears to me somewhat surprising that amongst the numerous publications on "English Church Architecture," so little attention should be paid to that interesting class of churches possessing *bell turrets, which, resting "on a single wall, present the appearance, on a small scale, of steeples whose substructure affects the ground plan of the building,"** the extreme rarity and peculiarity of which, saying nothing about their beauty of outline (which is unquestionably superior to that of the bell-*gable*), ought to have been a sufficient guarantee for their study and elucidation. With a view of assisting in rendering the subject more familiar, and of promoting, through the medium of your journal, the adaptation of this class of turrets to modern buildings, I forward you the following account, accompanied by a view † of the west end of the little church of Corston, near Malmsbury, the bell-turret of which, though differing widely from the majority, has, nevertheless, the principles of construction common to all.

Corston Church is of one date and style, if we except modern innovations, and may be considered to belong to the latter part of the fifteenth century. It consists of a nave and chancel, with south porch, and is prettily situated on a rising ground embossomed in rich and umbrageous foliage. The interior—alas! for that "puritanical zeal,"

> "——— which o'erthrew
> In town and city and sequestered glen,
> Altar and cross and church of solemn roof,"

is devoid of all that "dim," religious, and devotional character so peculiar to the house of prayer. Where *once* "admonitory texts inscribed the walls," the pomps of petty temporalities are displayed in "mural tablets." "The footworn epitaphs and shining effigies of brass inlaid" are gone, and the floor that once was occupied by oaken benches ranged in seemly rows, is now covered, through the good taste and feeling of the parochial authorities, with "pews" of beautiful white deal, erected by and under the superintendence of Mr. Churchwarden Carpenter, in a plain unostentatious manner, with doors, of course. But to the church. The exterior, or rather the west end—for, like the interior, the eastern part, windows, and porch have been "done up,"—is what more immediately demands our attention. The west wall, which supports the bell turret (it may be as well to remark here that the church is entirely without buttresses) is pierced by a two-light window (the head of which is of the usual plain Perpendicular character), surmounted by a hood mold, from the apex of which springs the corbel that supports the west arm of the cross, forming the lower plan of the turret, from the extremities of



which rise piers of an oblong plan, to the height of 4 feet, and then enlarge so as to form the cardinal sides of an octagon, by means of concave brackets, which continue (*straight*) along either end of the diagonal faces. Above this the octagon appears perfect in the elegant little battlemented parapet, from the inside of which rises the spire, ribbed and surmounted by a beautifully carved finial. The north and south sides of the turret are enriched with buttresses, and the interior is divided into two compartments by a partition, running east and west, thereby giving it the appearance of strength, as well as adding to its durability.

E. W. G.

* See Rev. J. L. Petit's interesting paper in vol. I. of the *Architectural Journal*.

† "The perspective" is drawn by *rule*, the place of sight being about 60 feet from the nearest angle.

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